our own weaknesses, let us each view leniently the failings of others.

The last volume of the same serial is *Pictures from St. Petersburg*, from the German of Jerrmann, — pleasant reading. The writer gives the following account of the rebuilding of the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg, after it was burnt down: —

"Long gazed Nicholas in deep sorrow at the grave of one of the prime ornaments of his beautiful city. At last he raised his head, passed his hand over his brow, and said, quite cheerfully, 'This day year will I again sleep in my room in the Winter Palace. Who undertakes the building?'

All present recoiled from the challenge. There stood around the Emperor many competent judges in such matters, but not one had the courage to undertake that which seemed impossible. There was a brief pause, and then General Kleinmichael, an aide-de-camp of the Emperor's, stepped forward and said, like the Duke of Alba to Don Philip, 'I will!'

'And the building is to be complete in a year?' asked the Emperor.

'Yes, Sire!'

''Tis good! Set to work!'

An hour later the still burning ruins were being cleared away. The destruction of the building had occurred in December, 1837: by December, 1838, it was rebuilt. Three months later it was occupied by the court.

Kleinmichael had kept his word: the building was completed, completed in the time specified! but—at what a price!! Only in Russia was such a wonderful work possible; only in Russia, where the will of the 'Master' is a decree of Providence; only in Russia, where they spare nothing, recoil from nothing, to fulfil his commands.

Under the Empress Elizabeth the palace had taken eight years to build: Kleinmichael completed it in one. True it is that almost the whole of the masonry resisted the fire, but the whole of the interior had to be reconstructed; and what a task that was! The work went on literally day and night: there was no pause for meals: the gangs of workmen relieved each other. Festivals were unheeded: the seasons themselves were overcome. To accelerate the work, the building was kept, the winter through, artificially heated to the excessive temperature of 24 to 26 degrees Reaumur. Many workmen sank under the heat, and were carried out dead or dying: a painter, who was decorating a ceiling, fell from his ladder struck with apoplexy. Neither money, health, nor life was spared. The Emperor, who, at the time of the conflagration, had risked his own life by penetrating into the innermost apartments to save the lives of others, knew nothing of the means employed to carry out his will. In the December of the following year, and in proud consciousness of his power, he entered the resuscitated palace and rejoiced over his work. The whole was constructed on the previous plan, but with some improvements and many embellishments. With the Empress on his arm, and followed by his whole family, he traversed the apartments of this immense building, completed, in one year's time, by the labour of thousands of men. He reached the saloon of St. George, the largest and most beautiful of all, and the royal family remained there longer than anywhere else, examining the costly gold mouldings of the ceiling, the five colossal bronze chandeliers, and the beautiful relievo over the throne, which represents St. George slaying the dragon. The Empress was tired, and would have sat down: *the patron spirit of Russia prevented her*: as yet there was no furniture in the hall, so she leaned upon the Emperor's arm and walked into the next room, followed by the entire retinue. The last of these had scarcely passed through the door when a thundering crash resounded through the palace, which trembled to its very foundations, and the air was darkened by clouds of dust. The timbers of the ceiling of the saloon of St. George had yielded to the weight of the chandeliers; and the whole had fallen in, crushing everything beneath its enormous mass. The saloon, a moment before so brilliant, was a heap of ruins. The splendid palace was again partly destroyed, but the genius of Russia had watched over her destiny—the imperial family were saved."

The Art of Dining; or Gastronomy and Gastronomers, in Mr. Murray's series, we had put by, with the half-resolve to write a long article upon the subject, so many thoughts and notions the perusal of its pleasant pages had raised. Other things, however, more professional if less *palateable*, demand our space. The art of dining affects all of us: *il faut dîner* is a truth of universal application, and the mode of doing this well and artistically might with great propriety be treated of in our pages. One of the great merits of the essay, witty and anecdotical throughout, is the endeavour to remove the vulgar notion that a dinner to be good must be expensive—a fatal mistake, preventive of much social enjoyment. To say nothing of those

"Who think less of good eating than the whisper,
When seated near them of some pretty lisper,"

nine-tenths of the recipients of a grand state dinner, formal and costly, would infinitely prefer a fish, a joint, and a bird, with freedom and good talk.

"Boys, 'tis little I care to dine
Where the host is vain and the guests are fine,
Where the wines are warm and the dishes cold,
And the mutton is young and the spinsters old."

Some of the most delightful dinners in memory have been the simplest—all wit, fun, and good sense, with merely "flashes of silence." "Cheerful looks make every dish a feast." The very essence of a dinner is absence of ceremony. Half the dinners that one goes to, offer but dry leaves instead of flowers: they are but mockeries of enjoyments, waste of hours, through fear of tyrant Custom and desire to be thought "genteel." Mr. Walker, of "The Original," truly says, "Any body can dine, but very few know how to dine so as to insure the greatest amount of health and enjoyment." Those who will help society to this knowledge, strangle foolish forms, and substitute for wasteful expenditure good taste, good sense, and good humour, should be regarded as its benefactors.

Popular Tables, arranged in a new form, giving information at sight for ascertaining, according to the Carlisle Tables of Mortality, the value of Lifehold, Leasehold, and Church Property, Renewal Fines, &c. By Chas. M. Willich, Actuary. Longman, Brown, and Co. 1852.

These seem to us a very valuable set of tables; they will be found useful by all our readers. The author has endeavoured to render the subject less intricate, by a simple arrangement of the figures, showing at once both the number of years' purchase, and the present value of 100*l.* a year. A correct idea of the value of any property is thus conveyed to the mind at sight; and, if required, an exact valuation of any amount of annuity or rental may be readily obtained. Reference to the experience of assurance offices has proved to him the superiority of the *Carlisle* over the *Northampton* table of mortality, as a measure of the duration of human life. Up to the present time, the only tables involving three lives, were those computed by Mr. Francis Bailey, so far back as 1802, according to the *Northampton* table of mortality. The Carlisle tables make the average of life longer than the Northampton. Thus, at 40, the expectation of life by the Northampton is 23 years and 08 parts, whereas by the Carlisle tables it is 27·61, and the experience of assurance offices confirms the latter calculation. Amongst many novel tables Mr. Willich has given, in addition to one for the renewal of one life in a lease originally granted for three lives, a table showing the fine payable for the renewal of two lives in a similar lease.

The Builders' Pocket Book of Reference; containing numerous Tables, calculated from Experiments on the strength of Timbers, Wood, and Iron Beams. &c. By Henry Malpas, Surveyor. Rouse and Co. 47, Bow-lane, Cheapside.

This is a hand-book to assist the merely practical in arriving at a knowledge of the strength of materials. Besides giving from personal experiments the weight timbers of various scantling will bear without bending, what will cause a 3-inch deflection, and the breaking-weight of the same; the strength of iron beams; the weight straps and bolts will resist; the adhesive power of nails, &c. it contains much elementary information very necessary to all connected with building, and forms altogether a little volume which will be very serviceable for those for whom it is intended.

Miscellanea.

Walking, Feet upwards, on a Ceiling.—A somewhat dubious announcement was some time ago made, that an American had invented an air-exhausting apparatus for the feet, whereby he was enabled to walk along the under-surfaces of ceilings, &c. It would appear that there must have been more truth than mere Yankee *invention* in the announcement, for the poor man has fallen a victim to his singular enterprise, not from inability to perform his boasted feat, in which he must have repeatedly succeeded, but from strange rashness subsequently, in trusting his weight under such circumstances to a *plaster* ceiling. He is said to have been a circus performer, and the *Wolcot Standard*, Wayne county, states that he had actually walked across the under surface of the circus roof in perfect safety; but from insinuations of jugglery, incidental doubtless to his profession, and quite natural under the circumstances, he offered to test the invention anywhere "on a ceiling having a smooth surface of sufficient strength to sustain his weight." The town-hall was accordingly selected, and the unfortunate inventor, Mr. Sands, is said to have walked several steps along the ceiling, when the plaster, on his return, gave way, as might have been anticipated, and the poor acrobat was precipitated head foremost to a depth of eighteen feet, and broke his neck. A failure like this would only prove the reality and the efficiency of such an apparatus, the nature of which it would be well not to lose sight of; for it might be made as useful in interior decoration or repair, &c. of large buildings, where expensive scaffolding is at present necessary, as the diving-bell in submarine engineering and other works. The possibility of its realisation may be made manifest to an unscientific mind by reminding it of the toy of boyhood, consisting of merely a soft leather disc, which, when moistened with water and pressed on a stone, will sustain its weight, even though pretty heavy, by simply pulling it into a void cone with a string fixed beforehand at the centre of the disc.

To America by Steam in Forty-eight Hours!—It is seriously proposed by Mr. D. S. Brown, a correspondent of the *Mining Journal*, to shape ships in such a way that, propelled by steam, they will rise to the surface of the sea altogether, and skim along it, so long as they *are* kept in motion, at the rate of thirty to sixty miles an hour,—thus, figuratively speaking, and as juveniles will at once comprehend the thing, making "ducks and drakes" of our steam shipping. This he proposes to do by giving them a greater depth of beam, and making the under surface flat, in two inclined planes, whereby, he calculates, that—the whole hull rising, while in motion, to the surface—the resistance at the bows, the great obstacle to progress, will be entirely removed. The hull is to be altogether of a square tubular form, the deck, bottom, and sides being of great thickness, and, in order to combine strength with lightness, intersected throughout with hollow cells or cavities, consisting of central cells, surrounded by smaller: by means of these the weight of the vessel would be reduced to one-eighth of the usual amount, and still have nearly all the advantages of solidity. The sanguine inventor believes that India might thus be reached in a fortnight (by the Cape, of course), and America in a couple of days!

Monument to Titian.—The *Athenæum* says,—A large sculptural monument, executed by the Brothers Zandomeneghi, has been solemnly consecrated to the memory of Titian in Venice;—a city in which almost every monument, from the ducal palace down to the Academy of Fine Arts, is itself a monument to the great master. The group consists of a figure of Titian, surrounded by other figures representing the arts, and supported by sculptural representations of the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The base of the monument is adorned with five bas-reliefs of the most celebrated of Titian's pictures. An imposing ceremonial attended the uncovering of the group, in which the military played a conspicuous, if not a very appropriate, part.

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